



**USAID**  
FROM THE AMERICAN PEOPLE

**AFGHANISTAN**

## PROGRAM HIGHLIGHTS

November 15-November 30, 2008

### AGRICULTURE & ALTERNATIVE DEVELOPMENT

#### **Afghanistan's Alkoni Melons Gain**

**Popularity in India:** Across Afghanistan, Alkoni melons are celebrated for their intensely sweet flavor and rich, nutritional value. With help from USAID, shoppers in New Delhi's Azadpur markets are also enjoying the Afghan melons.

Since early September 2008, USAID has been working with farmers in northern Afghanistan to export and sell their melons to India's markets. Although these hearty melons generally fare well against the rigors of transport, poor packaging left about 25 percent of them ruined before they reached their destination.



*Alkoni melons are carefully packaged for export.*

PHOTO: USAID/Afghanistan

To reduce these losses, USAID trained farmers and transporters how to clean, handle and package the melons. In addition, USAID provided high-quality packing material. As a result, fewer melons are lost in the journey and more are sold in the markets. This year, Afghanistan's farmers have shipped 640 metric tons of melons to India and seen nearly \$250,000 in sales. The healthy profits encourage farmers to grow legal crops and give them an opportunity to expand their farms and businesses.



*Students learned new mapping and information management skills.*

PHOTO: USAID/Afghanistan

#### **Afghan Professionals Gain Mapping Skills:**

Geographic Information Systems, or GIS, is key in helping Afghanistan's leaders to make important decisions on how to rebuild their country. Visual information and maps allow decision-makers to design creative solutions to problems such as how to secure food resources, expand new industries, and restore Afghanistan's damaged environment.

To empower Afghan professionals with this tool, USAID recently helped organize 12-day training in GIS for 25 students from 15 Afghan organizations, including the Ministry of



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Agriculture, Irrigation and Livestock; the World Bank; and the Wildlife Conversation Society.

Students in the course learned to use new GIS technologies to create better maps with satellite images and to gather information using Geographic Positioning Systems (GPS). With their new knowledge, the newly-trained professionals will provide Afghanistan's leaders with new maps to make informed, strategic decisions.

### DEMOCRACY & GOVERNANCE



*Supreme Court Justice Abdul Rashed Rashid thanked the U.S. Department of Treasury and USAID.*

PHOTO: USAID/Afghanistan

**Financial Crimes Training for Afghan Judges:** Thirty-four judges from six provinces are now better equipped to deal with financial crimes after receiving training from some of the most experienced financial crimes experts in the United States.

This November, USAID recruited 34 judges for the U.S. Treasury Department's Financial Investigative Techniques (FIT) training program. Judges learned about money laundering, corruption, terrorist financing, asset forfeiture, and Afghanistan's own anti-money laundering laws.

Richard N. Seaman, the U.S. Treasury's regional financial enforcement adviser, said he hopes the FIT training "will raise [the judges'] awareness of—and sensitivity to—various types of financial crimes." Once the FIT graduates return to their courts, Seaman believes that "investigators

and prosecutors will ultimately be more confident that cases will end with fair and successful dispositions when presented at trial before these judges."

### INFRASTRUCTURE

#### **Local Businesses to Maintain Afghanistan's Roads:**

Afghan businesses are taking responsibility for maintaining the country's newly built roads. On October 27, USAID-partner Louis Berger Group awarded three contracts totaling US\$12.6 million to Abtekar Faizi, Samim Wafa and Bacura companies. The new contracts will provide jobs for hundreds of local workers who will maintain 1,500 kilometers of Afghanistan's new regional and national highways.



*Afghan businessmen sign contracts to maintain the country's roads.*

PHOTO: USAID/Afghanistan



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This is the second award granted under the Ministry of Public Works' Operation and Maintenance Program. To ensure the program is effective, USAID trained Ministry officials on better methods for road maintenance, including how to use tools such as laptops, Geographic Positioning Systems (GPS), and mapping techniques. With better skills, the Ministry's staff will be more efficient making sure that the contractors keep the roads in good condition, providing safe, more cost effective travel for the people of Afghanistan.